

ANNUAL REPORT | 2017 - 2018



FLAT  OUT



Flat Out



Fighting to protect

rights

son



Flat Out Inc
 255 Ballarat Road
 Footscray 3011
 (formerly at Pin Oak Crescent, Flemington)
 P: 03 9372 6155
 F: 03 9372 5966
www.flatout.org.au
<https://www.facebook.com/FlatOutInc>
 ABN: 68037026364

“fighting to protect the human rights of women in prison”

Flat Out and its staff are committed to supporting the rights, safety, participation and empowerment of all children

Hours of Operation: Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm except Public Holidays

Annual Report Design Jacqui Rayner

Photography by Flat Out

©Flat Out Inc. 2018



How to get to Flat Out, 255 Ballarat Rd, Footscray 3011

Trains – Sunbury or Werribee to Footscray Train Station

From Footscray Train Station (Irving St)

Bus 223 – Yarraville to Highpoint Shopping Centre – Eleanor St/Ballarat Road bus stop

From Paisley St, Footscray

Bus 410 – Sunshine to Footscray, via Ballarat Road – Eleanor St/Ballarat Road bus stop

Contents

Formal Acknowledgement of Traditional Ownership	4
Acknowledgements and Thank you	5-6
Management Collective and Employees 2017-2018	7
Organisation Overview	8-9
Key Result Areas	10
Strategic Plan 2016-2018	11
Management Collective Board Report	12-13
StreetSmart Grant	14
Protocols and Partnerships	15
Training and Professional Development undertaken in 2017-2018	15
Independent Auditor's Report	17

Formal acknowledgement of Traditional Ownership

Flat Out acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first peoples of Australia. We pay our respects to the Wurundjeri people of the Woi Wurrung Language Group both past and present that make up part of the Kulin Nation, as the traditional owners of the land on which Flat Out is based.

We acknowledge the Elders, families and forebears of the tribes of the Kulin Nation who were the custodians of the land which we occupy. We acknowledge that the land on which we meet was the place of age old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal and that the Kulin Nation people's living culture had and has a unique role in the life of this region.

We recognise the loss and grief held by Indigenous people in Australia caused by alienation from traditional lands, the loss of lives and freedoms and the forced removal of children.

We defend the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to live according to their own beliefs, values and customs and the importance of their contribution to strengthening and enriching the heritage of all Australians.

We believe that equal partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are integral to addressing the needs of communities.

We believe that ignorance, apathy, resistance and opposition still exists about reconciliation and the need to overcome Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage is great.

We believe that through understanding the spiritual relationship between the land and its first peoples, we share our future and take the steps towards living equally in harmony with dignity and respect.

We accept responsibility for challenging racism, exclusion and oppression in all its forms.



Special thank you

To the Women Flat Out has worked with over the past year, thank you for giving us the opportunity to work with you. Thank you for sharing your stories, insights, courage, advice and strength.

Thank you to our funders

COMMONWEALTH & STATE GOVERNMENT FUNDING

NORTH WESTERN MELBOURNE PHN (MELBOURNE PRIMARY CARE NETWORK) DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG TREATMENT SERVICE DELIVERY

Michal Morris, NWMPHN, Director, Alcohol and Other Drugs and Suicide Prevention

Brad Pearce, NWMPHN, Acting Manager, Alcohol and Other Drugs and Suicide Prevention

Monique Parker, NWMPHN, Project Support Officer, AOD & Suicide Prevention

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (DHHS) SPECIALIST HOMELESSNESS SERVICES ARISING FROM THE NATIONAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING AGREEMENT

Helga Jennings, Area Manager, Brimbank Melton Area, West Division, DHHS

Kim Garlick, Local Engagement Officer, Local Connections, Brimbank Melton Area, West Division, DHHS

Brendan Duffy, SHSC Support, DHHS

NON-GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Grassroots fundraising and donations

Melbourne Magistrates' Court of Victoria

StreetSmart Australia

Donations

Amanda G, Andrea B, Anon, Cagla A, Cameron B, Doris J, Eastern Emergency Relief Network, Gordon C, Jo S, Prison Fellowship and Pastor John & Sarah Sparey - Citycare Hillsong and volunteers, Reeanna M, Sarah S, Share the Dignity.

Flat Out would also like to thank the following individuals and organisations for their significant support, advice, assistance and contribution of time, skills and resources to Flat Out including:

- Speaking at public forums and conferences
- Co-training and facilitation inside of Dame Phyllis Frost Centre Women's prison
- Co-writing submissions and responses to inquiries
- In-kind donations of time and resources
- Co-advocacy with clients and on systemic issues
- Adam Robinson, CEO StreetSmart Australia
- Abolitionist and Transformative Justice Centre
- Amanda George, Flat Out Management Collective Board
- Amy Jenkins, Flat Out Management Collective Board
- Anthony Kelly and the team, Flemington & Kensington Community Legal Centre
- Antoinette Braybrook and the team, Djirra (formerly the Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Legal Service)
- Billi Clarke, Launch Housing, Southbank
- Bree Carlton, Flat Out Management Collective Board
- Brendan Money, Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Operations, Corrections Victoria
- Caraniche, Employment Assistance Program
- Charandev Singh, Human Rights and Indigenous Education
- Advocate, Activist and Community Educator
- The Programs team at DPFC
- Cathy Whelan, Chief of Staff, Office of the Minister for Corrections Victoria
- Council to Homeless Persons (CHP)
- Crystal McKinnon, Flat Out Management Collective Board
- Debbie Kilroy and the team at Sisters Inside, QLD
- Eastern Emergency Relief Network
- East St Kilda Women's House, Launch Housing
- Emeline Gaske, Flat Out Management Collective Board
- Heather Holst, Launch Housing and staff
- Inner Melbourne Legal
- Inside Access at the Mental Health Legal Centre
- Jill Prior, Flat Out Management Collective Board
- Jo Smith
- Jobs Australia
- Justice Connect
- Karen Fletcher, Flat Out Management Collective Board
- Kay Dyson, Flat Out Management Collective Board
- Launch Housing, Southbank & LESK
- Liz Shield, Flat Out Management Collective Board

- Local Area Service Network (LASN), North & West Metropolitan Region
- Malcolm Feiner, Corrections Resource Centre
- Mehran Erfanian, Centrax Computer Services
- Phoebe Barton, Flat Out Management Collective Board
- Prison Fellowship Victoria, Pastors John & Sarah Sparey and volunteers, Citycare Hillsong
- Reeanna Maloney, Flat Out Management Collective Board
- Rosie Camilleri, Launch East St Kilda
- Salvation Army Housing Services, EastCare
- Sam Biondo, Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA)
- St Kilda Crisis Centre
- WhiteDog GreenFrog IT consultants
- Women's Housing Ltd
- Unison Community Housing

Friends of Flat Out

Thank you to all the amazing Flat Out supporters and contributors who have given time, energy and resources.

It's your assistance and support that makes Flat Out a unique strong organisation.

FLAT OUT MANAGEMENT COLLECTIVE MEMBERS | JULY 2017 – JUNE 2018

Amanda George, Amy Jenkins, Emeline Gaske, Jill Prior, Karen Fletcher, Kay Dyson & Reeanna Maloney

RESIGNED MANAGEMENT COLLECTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

Bree Carlton, Crystal McKinnon, Liz Shield & Phoebe Barton

FLAT OUT EMPLOYEES | JULY 2017 – JUNE 2018

Alice Macartney
Locum Team Leader

Billi Clarke
Acting Executive Officer

Gaylene Donaldson
Outreach Support & Advocacy

Jake Argyll
Executive Officer

Leona Xu
Outreach Support & Advocacy

Michelle Montague
Finance Manager

Michele Old
Administration Resource Coordinator

Sarah Williams
Outreach Support & Advocacy

Wendy Hedges
Outreach Support & Advocacy

LOCUM EMPLOYEES

Eva Kalivas, Kathy Prior & Nora Conci

PAST EMPLOYEES

Jagur McEwan & Elaine Cruise

VOLUNTEERS

Emma Hart



Organisation Overview

Flat Out is an independent, not for profit, community based organisation that is managed by and for women.

Flat Out is committed to co-creating safer spaces, fostering support and self-determination for people who identify as sisters, intersex, transgender and/or gender diverse women. We respect that identity is for the individual to define, and work collectively to ensure that people with these identities are accorded respect and access to our support and advocacy and provided ongoing opportunities to inform policies concerning the intersection of their identities with experiences of criminalisation.

Flat Out Management Collective (Board) embraces fairness and equality through the essential roles of governance, management and leadership that are underpinned by a comprehensive set of values, policies and procedures and delegated authority.

Flat Out is a state-wide homelessness support and advocacy service for women 18+, (with/without children) who have had contact with the criminal justice and/or prison system in Victoria. Flat Out receives government funding through the Department of Health and Human Services (Victoria), the North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network (NWMPHN), the Department of Health (Federal), and project funds from various sources to increase our capacity to deliver innovative and effective services, advocacy and social change. Government funding is for the purpose of providing individualised support and advocacy for women (with or without children) to address homelessness, drug and alcohol treatment and a range of other support and advocacy to address the underlying causes of criminalisation.

Independent funding is raised through donations, grants and grassroots fundraising for the purposes of Flat Out's social change and systemic advocacy work.

Flat Out leads and participates in research and community education, seeking to inform the wider community about the harms that occur for women in the criminal justice system. Flat Out works directly with women who have experienced criminalisation and/or incarceration and to improve the rights and conditions of women in prison. Flat Out works to prevent women from going to prison and keeping women out of prison once they are released.

The theories and values that underpin Flat Out's work have remained constant since Flat Out's inception (1988). Through community involvement, education and research, Flat Out works toward having a strong voice in the prison abolition movement in Australia and internationally. Our vision is that eventually prisons will be viewed as antiquated, cruel and ineffective institutions. Not unlike the movements to abolish slavery; movements to end racism; the women's liberation movement, and the movement to end homelessness. Flat Out seeks to work alongside diverse communities to end all forms of inequality and unfairness. We see all these movements as interconnected.



Key Result Area 1:

Led by Women's Lived Experience
All platforms of Flat Out's activity are driven by women's lived experience.

Key Result Area 2:

Exemplary Outreach Support and Advocacy
Flat Out's direct support service activities are for women 18+ who have had contact with the criminal justice and/or prison system in Victoria; with a focus on women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and for women seeking support to access drug and alcohol treatment and other therapeutic services.

Key Result Area 3:

Effective Systemic Advocacy and Social Change
Over its 30 years of operation Flat Out has achieved a unique and respected position in the wider community as an advocate for systemic and social change. This role is an integral part of Flat Out's commitment to the rights of all women involved in the criminal justice system and the long term vision of abolishing the prisons.

Key Result Area 4:

Strategic Organisational Development
Flat Out has dedicated management collective board members, employees and volunteer activists that implement our vision and plans. Stakeholders and partners are also crucial to Flat Out's strength and viability. Flat Out is continually improving and strengthening its work through regular review, reflection and change. We are a learning and adaptive organisation.

Key Result Area 5:

Innovative Financial Sustainability and Capacity Building
Flat Out receives recurrent government funding as well as funding and grants from non-government and independent sources for specific initiatives including Flat Out's systemic advocacy and social change work. Flat Out has continued to grow, dedicating significant resources to organisational development and improved services. This plan acknowledges Flat Out's sustained focus on continuous quality improvement. To achieve this Flat Out will maintain its commitment to generating income from diverse sources to achieve the future directions of the organisation.

Flat Out Strategic Plan 2016-2018

Flat Out Values

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's as the first peoples of Australia
 - Our organisation being run by and for women
- Working with women (and their children) who are criminalised
 - Providing high quality support services and advocacy
 - Freedom, equality and self-determination
 - Social justice and economic opportunities for all
 - Everyone has the right to lead safe, violence-free lives
- Being part of a movement to end criminalisation and imprisonment
 - Working with the wider community toward our vision

Our Vision

- Women are not criminalised or imprisoned

How we will get there

- We will remain focussed on working with women who are criminalised
 - We will provide high quality woman centred support and advocacy
- We will support women to obtain appropriate and affordable housing
- We will support women in their journeys to good health and wellbeing
 - We will support women to reconnect with family and community
 - We will actively promote effective alternatives to criminalisation and imprisonment
- We will lead and contribute to effective social and systemic change
 - We will work with the wider community towards our vision

Key challenges for this plan

- Achieving Flat Out's vision and plan in a period of heightened focus on law and order, changes to sentencing practices and unprecedented prison expansion
- Securing Flat Out's substantive funding (government and philanthropic) beyond June 2018
 - Returning our organisational deficit to surplus whilst maintaining quality improvements
- Retaining our skilled and committed management collective board, employees and volunteers

Stop strip searches
of women in

Management Collective Board Report

“Thirty years ago, Flat Out Inc was established. It was with a sense of absolute surprise and shock to be told that Women Against Prison was granted funding by the state government to set up Flat Out.”

Flat Out then had ‘two main objectives: The overall aim of working towards ending the imprisonment of women, and secondly, improving services and conditions for women prisoners both pre and post-release’. These objectives remain.

Thirty years has seen an exponential rise in the number of women inside, with Aboriginal and Vietnamese background women particularly high, the demand on housing and post-release support has skyrocketed, but the housing stock available, has in fact diminished.

Every month around 10 women are released from prison straight into homelessness.

- There is a 45% churn of women going in and out of prison each year.
- Over 30% of women on remand, do not end up being given a prison sentence.
- 30 % of women are out of prison in 7 days.
- almost half of the women inside are out in 6 months.

Instead of governments putting their (our) resources into safe housing which is the most significant determinant of whether women will return to prison or not, they instead prioritise prison ‘housing’ - the most expensive accommodation available. Every new prison cell costs \$1m. To keep a person in prison costs \$127,000 a year, the cost of a permanent room at the Windsor Hotel, with money to spare.

Why does splashing cash on punitive posturing from manipulating the politics of fear, always trump prevention policies - even when crime statistics remain stable? Is this the society that we want?

What has gone so horribly wrong in our society that governments win power promising harsher punishment, more police and more prisons, whilst the public education system crumbles, the public and community housing sector is carved up for private sale and the chasm between the haves and have nots gapes wider each year.

In Victoria this year, the number of begging offences doubled. And despite the Victorian Crimes Statistics Agency reporting a reduction in assaults on emergency service workers over the last 10

years, the government has introduced mandatory sentences for people who injure emergency workers. These offences will now be on the same sentencing level as murder and rape. The people most affected by these new offences will be people experiencing mental illness and their families, who may now be reluctant to call for help.

The year that was.

The Women Transforming Justice project, a partnership with Darebin Community Legal Centre, LACW (Legal and Advocacy Centre for Women) and Flat Out, received funding over two years from the Legal Services Board to provide specialist intensive support to reduce the number of criminalised women being denied bail. This is a very exciting project that will commence in 2018.

Flat Out has for many years called for the family violence criminalised women have experienced, to be acknowledged. Criminalised women often experience discrimination and ignorance when they seek support from family violence services. This year Flat Out received funding from Family Safety Victoria to undertake systemic advocacy work with family violence services to assist them to respond better to the needs and experiences of our clients. This funding is a recognition of ones of Flat Out’s strengths, systemic advocacy informed by the experiences of our clients. This is a very exciting development and we thanks Billi Clarke for work in securing this.

Flat Out has for the last 3 decades been campaigning with many other organisations to stop strip searches in women’s prisons. At last it seems there are to be significant changes to drastically reduce the number of strip searches in women’s prisons. This is a welcome movement.

“Every month around 10 women are released from prison straight into homelessness.”

In 2017, Flat Out moved to a new office space in Footscray facilitating space to grow.

This year especially, the Management Collective Board would like to thank all of the workers who have assisted us in what has been a difficult year. Unfortunately, we had a number of workers on sick leave and this put a significant burden on the remaining workers who did a magnificent job in continuing the difficult work the organisation undertakes. We undertook an external organisational review which has provided us with perspectives and ideas to strengthen the organisation.

We also farewelled a number of extraordinarily committed women who had been on the Management Collective Board for many years. Small community organisations do not have the resources and economies of scale of larger ones, this means the responsibility and work on the Management Collective Board is great. We have had fantastic new women come onto the Management Collective Board and also workers, to give us new energy, perspectives and ideas.

And, as usual, we are Flat Out!

On behalf of the Flat Out Management Collective Board

StreetSmart Grant

Breaking down social isolation

Flat Out is very grateful to StreetSmart for funds we used to support women coming out of prison. The primary purpose of this grant was to optimise opportunities for homeless women post release prison.

Essential items brokerage.

The main outcome of this project has been to have necessary funds available for the purchase of essential personal items which directly connect to women's capacity to obtain and maintain housing and avoid re-criminalisation.

Homelessness continues to be a common feature in the underlying circumstances for why women go to prison. The result of a tough on crime environment is that more homeless people will be targeted and imprisoned unless we can provide a timely, targeted and practical crisis response. Our emergency fund has been crucial.

Thank you to Adam Robinson & StreetSmart

Emergency and essential items included

- Emergency accommodation expenses (where other funds are not available)
- Emergency food where other sources are not available
- Household items such as kitchen utensils, sheets/duona/pillows
- Mobile phones and phone cards
- MYKI and Day Passes
- Pharmacotherapy and other prescription medication
- Proof of identification documents
- Refurbished computers/IT hardware for women seeking education and employment
- Specialist psychological and other medical reports
- Sport and recreation memberships and/or equipment
- Undergarments, warm clothing, footwear and other essential clothing



Flat Out has protocols with the following agencies:

- Dame Phyllis Frost Centre (DPFC) Women's Information, Leadership and Self-Advocacy Program
- Flemington and Kensington Community Legal Centre
- Haven HomeSafe
- Launch Housing – East St Kilda Women's House and Southbank
- Local Area Service

- Network (LASN), North West Metropolitan Region
- McAuley Women's Services
- Salvation Army, EastCare Housing Services
- St Kilda Crisis Centre
- Women's Housing Limited
- Unison Community Housing

- Flat Out has access rights to transitional housing properties with the following agencies:
- Launch Housing
 - Salvation Army, EastCare Housing Services
 - Women's Housing Limited
 - Unison Community Housing

Training and professional development undertaken by Flat Out

- Governance of Australia Not-for-Profit Officers, Directors and the Board
- CRAF Specialist training
- ICE training
- SASHS Open House
- Law and Advocacy Centre for Women presentation
- Uniting Connections Program presentation
- Accredited First Aid Course-Level 2
- Theory of Change, Emma Pritchard Part 1
- DHHS Enhance Pathways Worker program
- SHS training – Working with Vulnerable Families

- Theory of Change, Emma Pritchard Part 2
- IWD panel: Putting Women's prisons out of business; Gender responsive justice & solutions in an increasingly punitive world-Centre for Innovative Justice, LACW & RMIT
- Launch Housing St Kilda IWD event
- SHS training – Promoting Recovery, Understanding complex trauma & trauma informed practice
- SHS training – SHIP training
- Council to Homeless

- Persons Election Conference
- DHHS Enhanced Housing Pathways practice discussion: Flat Out presenting
- Caraniche Forensic AOD Workforce training
- Rhed Program visit and presentation
- Launch Housing options training
- Theory of Change, Emma Pritchard Part 3
- VAADA Victorian AOD Service Providers Conference
- DPFC Orientation training

DirectorsLionel R. Arnold CA B.Bus
Raelene Cheng CPA B.Com**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
TO THE MEMBERS OF
FLAT OUT INC.****Opinion**

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of FLAT OUT INC., which comprises the financial position as at 30th June 2018, and the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including summary of significant accounting policies and managements assertion statement.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of FLAT OUT INC. as at 30th June 2018, and its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditors Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the Entity in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Emphasis of Matter-Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist FLAT OUT INC. to meet the requirements of Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Report

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the *applicable legislation* and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so. Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Entity's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

**J. L. Collyer & Partners
Accountants**Dated in Glen Waverley on
26th November 2018**Lionel R. Arnold****Partner**

**NO JUSTICE IN
PRISON FOR
ABORIGINAL
WOMEN**

FLAT OUT WELCOMES YOUR SUPPORT & INVOLVEMENT

YOU CAN ATTEND OUR PUBLIC FORUMS AND EVENTS

YOU CAN BECOME A MEMBER OR ASSOCIATE MEMBER OF FLAT OUT

SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY EDUCATION WORK BY DISTRIBUTING OUR PUBLISHED MATERIALS

PARTICIPATE AND OR PRESENT IN OUR EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY TRAININGS

STAY INFORMED THROUGH OUR WEBSITE AND FACE BOOK WWW.FLATOUT.ORG.AU

IF YOU HAVEN'T DONE SO ALREADY, PLEASE CONSIDER OUR MONTHLY GIVING PROGRAM TO SUPPORT OUR IMPORTANT SOCIAL CHANGE AND SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY WORK. WE WOULD BE VERY HAPPY IF YOU WOULD CONSIDER DONATING THE PRICE OF ONE COFFEE A DAY.

YOUR CONTRIBUTION, HOWEVER BIG OR SMALL, SUPPORTS OUR WORK AND EMPOWERS US TO ADVOCATE WITH AND FOR CRIMINALISED AND IMPRISONED WOMEN IN VICTORIA.

ALL CONTRIBUTIONS ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE AND HONOURED THROUGH OUR ANNUAL REPORT. YOU CAN MAKE A TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION AT: WWW.GIVENOW.COM.AU/FLATOUT

FOR A COPY OF FLAT OUT'S FINANCIAL STATEMENTS PLEASE CONTACT FLAT OUT EXECUTIVE OFFICER ON 9 372 6155.



NO JUSTICE IN
PRISON FOR
ABORIGINAL
WOMEN

STRIP SEARCHES
ARE SEXUAL
ASSAULT



ANNUAL REPORT | 2017 – 2018